

THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 1973

'He's Coming Home Saturday'

POW Daughter Awaits Father



By Tom Kelley—The Washington Post

The Perpetual Rosary for Peace goes on in dimly-lit Lourdes chapel at Catholic U.

By Donald P. Baker

Washington Post Staff Writer

Page Randor was understandably confused by the President's announcement.

For one thing, she is just 6 years old, and for another, she has no recollection of her father, other than what her mother tells her.

So yesterday morning, before school, when she heard her mother telling her sister Lisa, 13, about the signing of a cease-fire agreement on Saturday, she excitedly called a fellow first grader and said:

"My Daddy is coming home on Saturday. We're going to sign his papers and I'll wear my special dress."

At that point, Andrea Randor interrupted the conversation to explain the tedious methods of war—and peace—to Page.

Army Sgt. IC Donald Randor is one of 108 American military men whose capture by the Vietcong has been acknowledged by the Department of Defense.

"This Saturday of all days, will mark exactly five years since we last heard from Don," said Mrs. Randor. "He called us on the telephone, from Vietnam. Although he assured me everything was all right, he sounded very apprehensive, and he made me the same."

Four days later, during the Tet offensive at Hue, Sgt. Randor became a statistic.

See FAMILY, B2, Col. 1



Associated Press

TEARS FOR FATHER—Debbie Christian of Virginia Beach, Va., wipes away tears as she hears of Vietnam truce. Her father has been a POW for six years.

FAMILY, From B1

tic. For five weeks he was listed as missing, and then his status was changed to captured.

"He was wounded—in the arm," his wife said. "We've never heard from him, no mail, no communication, but I feel that he's still being held prisoner. My preparation is not in that (other) direction." The Vietcong have not acknowledged his capture.

The Randors had met as elementary school children in the Bronx, married after high school and "came to Baltimore for a year" in 1964 when he was a draftee stationed at Ft. Holabird.

He re-enlisted that year, and in 1967, volunteered to go to Vietnam. He left Oct. 10. Page was 20 months old, and Lisa was 7½ years.

Mrs. Randor stayed in Baltimore, where she works as a public relations aide at the poison information center of the University of Maryland's School of Pharmacy. She and the girls live in suburban Owings Mills, where Lisa is in junior high school and Page in first grade.

When Lisa got to Pikesville Junior High yesterday, "everybody was kissing me and screaming that my father is coming home and that I would get off school to meet him," she said.

Lisa's memories of her father sound like those flashback scenes in a war movie: "He used to wash his car a lot . . . He took a lot of pictures of us . . . He never went to church, except on Easter, until Page was born . . . He's real tall and weighed a lot because he used to eat a lot . . ."

On Saturday, when the peace agreement is to be signed in Paris, the parties "shall . . . exchange complete lists of captured persons."

Lisa is "going to church on Saturday." Her own church is Presbyterian, but she isn't going to be parochial about her choice. "I

don't know what's open, but I've just got to go. I hope my sister will go too. Some of my friends are going also.

"It's something you believe. I've prayed a lot," Lisa said.

Her mother will sit by the telephone, waiting for a call from Capt. James Rumgay, the casualty assistance officer assigned to her. It is his task to get the news—good or bad—and pass it on to the family.

"I'm standing by 24 hours a day," Capt. Rumgay said yesterday. "I'll go in person rather than call. And I'll accompany them to the hospital to which he is sent."

Rumgay, who served in Korea, has visited the Randors about twice a month for the last two years. He said Mrs. Randor is "very outgoing" and confident of her husband's safe return. "But down deep, she's prepared if he doesn't," Rumgay said.

"I've thought about it, subconsciously," Mrs. Randor said. "But we are counting on him."

Mrs. Randor has even allowed herself the luxury of worrying about which prisoners will be released first. In a war where the vast majority of captured men have been officers, her thought is, "I hope they don't do this thing by rank."